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Chairman: Mr. PETRESKI (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

later: Mr. STADTHAGEN (Nicaragua)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 101: INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE CONVENING OF A UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/50/479 and E/1995/69)

1. Ms. WILLIAMS-MANIGAULT (United States of America) said that migration was increasingly moving to the forefront of policy debates within and among States. The United States welcomed continued discussion of the issue and was actively involved in a variety of forums. It supported the work of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development and endorsed the work plan of the Commission adopted at its 1995 session. Her country's thinking on future actions would be based on the results of the Commission's work during its 1997 session devoted to international migration.

2. The United States had also supported the convening of a regional migration conference for the Commonwealth of Independent States and neighbouring States. Indeed, regional migration conferences could be a positive venue for exploring mutual solutions to migration issues provided they were well-focused and were based on a consensus among regional States and were likely to produce results. However, at a time of scarce resources, it would be premature and unwise to incur the expense of convening yet another global conference on social issues following the three others held since September 1994.

3. Time was needed to absorb and translate into action the commitments that Governments had undertaken at the Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing conferences. Moreover, since there was no global consensus on what to do about migration, a conference on the issue would accomplish little. Such a conference should be considered only after an assessment of progress on discussions of the issues in 1997.

4. Mr. PAIVA (International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that the links between migration and development deserved to be further explored and better understood, since they would serve as a basis for revising internationally acceptable measures to address both the positive and the disruptive effects of international migration on individual countries and world society as a whole. The importance of the issue argued for early efforts to move the debate forward. However, it was up to Member States to decide on the timing, modalities and forums in which such debate should be held. Through international dialogue and cooperation, migration could be understood, dealt with and channelled so as to be a positive force. Conversely, it could be suppressed and develop a dynamic all its own.

5. IOM was implementing two broad categories of programmes. The first facilitated the immigration of foreign nationals whose skills were wanted and sought by receiving countries, while the second assisted developing country nationals who had acquired expertise and advanced training abroad and who wished to return to their regions of origin and contribute to development process there. The positive impact of planned and orderly migration on the development process in both industrialized and developing countries was obvious. On the other hand, large-scale unplanned and disruptive migration could have negative effects on society in both industrialized and developing countries.

6. Through its operations in over 70 countries, IOM fostered international understanding and dialogue to address the issues of migration through cooperative efforts. In that connection, it had expanded research on the causes and consequences of international migration. The project on emigration dynamics in four regions of the developing world financed by the United Nations Population Fund was part of that effort. His organization also tried to be a forum for intergovernmental discussion on current migration topics. It had thus sponsored international seminars on North-South migration, migration and development and trafficking in migrants.

7. He had been struck by the convergence of views in discussions on a possible conference on international migration and development. There was agreement that migration was a key item on the current international political agenda and that it merited strengthened international dialogue and cooperation. IOM believed that there were many viable options ranging from an international conference to smaller-scale meetings. In that regard, the process put in place to prepare a regional conference on the problems of refugees, displaced persons, other forms of involuntary displacement and returnees in the Commonwealth of Independent States and relevant neighbouring States could serve as a point of reference.

8. Mr. LOZANO (Mexico) said that migration was an intrinsic part of the development process. The increasing globalization of the world economy had led to increased international migratory flows which evolved independently of government decisions or policies. The question of migration was of great importance to his Government, since millions of people crossed the country's long borders with the United States of America.

9. The International Conference on Population and Development had constituted a major step forward in the discussion of international migration issues in relation to economic development. The need for better understanding of that question had been expressed at the Conference, which had also sought to deal with it in a more constructive manner. The documents presented at the Conference had demonstrated that international migration could have considerable positive effects on both the communities of origin and the receiving communities and that the migration of labour was basically triggered by a genuine demand for manpower which the labour force of the receiving country could not or did not wish to meet. History had shown that migrant labour had helped to develop many of the wealthiest regions of the planet.

10. A more thorough analysis was needed for a better understanding of the phenomenon of international migration and its implications, since a lack of understanding of the problem had led to growing and unnecessary xenophobic and racist attitudes. Reiterating his delegation's determination to shed more light on the scope and benefits of the problem and to intensify efforts to attain cooperation in that effort, he expressed support for the convening of regional meetings on migration with the participation of all international agencies and non-governmental organizations. Such regional conferences could help define possible terms of reference for an international conference on migration and development. They could be preceded by workshops which would concentrate on regional problems, and the studies generated by the workshops could form part of international documentation on the subject.

11. The migration of labour was not a panacea for development problems. The best response was to promote sustained economic growth and sustainable development. Mexico's interest lay in exporting goods and services and sharing opportunities for prosperity, not in losing its cherished human resources.

12. Ms. YANG Yanyi (China) said that in order for international migration to have a more positive impact on the countries of origin as well as the receiving countries, international cooperation should be strengthened on the basis of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. Since discrimination against immigrants was on the rise in certain receiving countries, major goals in the international community's discussions and deliberations on the question of migration should include prevention of racism, ethnocentricism and xenophobia, the elimination in the receiving countries of discrimination against immigrants, respect for their cultures, religions and traditions and encouragement for their integration into the local economy and society. Migration had positive economic effects in the countries of origin as a result of remittances of money from emigrants back home. However, migration might have negative effects, such as the brain drain which adversely affected the countries of origin. The international community needed to address that issue in depth in order to seek an effective solution.

13. The Chinese Government was in favour of legal immigration and against illegal immigration. It advocated dialogue and cooperation on an equal footing among various countries in order to expand the advantages of international migration and avoid its disadvantages. China endorsed the statement of the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 that the international community should attach greater importance to the question of international migration and make concerted efforts to find a solution to the problem.

14. Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia) said that Tunisia wanted to foster a global vision of international migration and development between the countries of the North and those of the South. Migrants had an important role to play in the relations and multifaceted exchanges which should be established among peoples. Today, migration was a universal phenomenon which affected virtually all major regions of the world. The scope and the constant development of the migratory phenomenon must be taken into account in any cooperation and partnership scheme. In that connection, migrants played key roles in both receiving countries and countries of origin in the economic and cultural spheres. Therefore, in its cooperation agreements with Maghreb Union and European Union countries, Tunisia had given high priority to the cultural and human dimensions in relations of joint development, partnership and solidarity.

15. With respect to religious convictions and spiritual values, the basic rights of migrants should be respected. That was why the President of Tunisia had called for the adoption of a convention governing both the rights of migrants and the obligations of receiving countries. Migrants could serve not only as a catalyst for development but also as a bridge of understanding between peoples. It was therefore time for the United Nations to address the question of immigration and convene, before the end of the century, a conference on international migration and development. His delegation therefore hoped that such a conference would receive support from both countries of origin and

receiving countries and would be carefully prepared in order to ensure its success.

Mr. Stadthagen (Nicaragua), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

16. Mr. ZIAUDDIN (Bangladesh) said that the movement of population was a natural outcome of the quest for peace and prosperity. The world's productive resources were unevenly distributed, making it necessary to create a mechanism for orderly migrations for the common benefit. Market forces should be allowed to pool productive resources in accordance with supply and demand without the distortions in the labour market caused by the erection of artificial barriers to migration. Curiously, however, the nations which had benefited most from migration and those who had contributed the most migrants were reluctant to consider the opportunity that an orderly flow of migration could offer. Moreover, orderly migration must be promoted if trafficking in migrants was to be curbed. The global community must restore respect for migration as a constructive force in the economy. Over the long term, migrants often returned to their home countries in substantial numbers; thus, the issue should not be oversimplified by branding developing countries as the source and the developed world as the recipients of migrants.

17. The goals and objectives of a possible international conference on migration must be clearly identified and defined. Some basic issues that could be highlighted during the preparatory process included avoiding politicization of the issue, identifying the root causes of migration, facilitating the reintegration of returning migrants, respect for the rights of both documented and undocumented migrants, reunification of migrant workers with their families, respect for the cultural values of the migrants within their host countries and greater cooperation and dialogue to assist migrants in assimilating in their host societies. A preparatory process must be initiated at the national, regional and international levels, and greater involvement of regional and international organizations must be ensured.

18. Mr. GAMITO (Portugal) said that his country had experienced emigration for many years, and more recently was also becoming a receiving country. The Portuguese Government attached great importance to the protection of the rights and interests of its nationals abroad, and considered that one of the mainstays of government policy should be the increased social integration of documented immigrants. At the international level, it continued to support exchange and cooperation to improve the status of migrants and their families, and to fight against trafficking and exploitation. Migration policies should be established within the context of a global strategy.

19. Many of the problems of migration could be lessened if countries ensured that the human rights of everyone in all territories were respected, found ways to avoid major flows of migrants and countered the lack of information at the basis of many prejudices by finding points of mutual understanding with other peoples and regions of the world. The international community should recognize the value of the work of migrants and the importance of their presence, together with their families, for the development of the receiving countries as well as the countries of origin.

20. Mr. KAUSIKAN (Singapore) said that the root cause of international migration was lack of development. If given a choice, every country would want its people to stay and work at home. Poverty and lack of opportunity forced people to leave their families and risk the uncertainties of migrating overseas. Pure economic logic and market needs resulting from uneven levels of development dictated migrant flows between countries and regions.

21. The international community must ask itself what effect a United Nations-sponsored international conference on migration and development would have on those economic fundamentals. Current economic trends showed that international migration largely involved unskilled labour, while highly skilled workers remained in demand all over the world. The general global trend was towards a slackening of demand for unskilled workers, because advances in science and technology were making wealth creation increasingly dependent on knowledge rather than on inputs of labour or even natural resources. In a situation of weakening demand and growing supply, the basis for dealing with the question must be the domestic law of the host countries. Overly intrusive international regimes would risk a disruption in demand to the detriment of sending countries.

22. It might be prudent to focus on existing agreements reached at the International Conference on Population and Development or the World Summit for Social Development, rather than duplicate their efforts by creating a new regime. The ultimate solution, however, to the problems associated with international migration was development for the countries that export migrant labour. The international community should not allow itself to be distracted from that primary goal. Another United Nations conference on that subject might weaken existing United Nations development institutions and open developing countries to accusations of lack of focus and duplication of effort, which could increase pressure to cut back on development programmes. That was not an outcome any developing country would like.

23. Mr. ABDELLAH (United Republic of Tanzania) recalled that no agreement had been reached on the issue at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. He was disappointed that the Secretariat had not provided the Committee with a comprehensive report on the discussions which had taken place in Geneva.

24. Migration should not be seen as a panacea for lack of development: it was in the interest of developing countries to export goods, not citizens. The solution to the problem lay in cooperation and solidarity between countries of origin and receiving countries. Tanzania was among the countries directly affected by international migration; therefore, it fully supported the convening of an international conference on the subject.

25. Mr. RESHETNYAK (Ukraine) said that international migration acted as a barometer of the state of the world economy, showing up the unevenness of its development. Unregulated mass migrations were destabilizing and undesirable, which made it all the more important for the world community to agree on measures both to prevent significant migration flows and to provide humanitarian and social assistance. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 had resulted in thousands of people migrating from one region to another. Owing to its geographical position and stable political and social conditions, Ukraine had

become a refuge for many thousands of people from conflict areas. Over the past months there had been a significant increase in the number of illegal immigrants, particularly those making their way across Ukraine to the West, who stayed in Ukraine for an indefinite period and added to the economic burden and the crime problems of the country.

26. Another current difficulty for Ukraine was the return of the Crimean Tatars from central Asia, where they had been deported during the Second World War. Around 280,000 had already arrived and almost as many more were expected shortly. The Government, despite its economic crisis and acting virtually single-handedly, provided them with significant material assistance. Its resources were limited, however, and Ukraine looked forward to receiving help from other States and from international organizations in dealing with the problem.

27. Practical steps should be taken to regulate the flow of migrants in cooperation between sending, receiving and transit countries. Existing mechanisms of the United Nations and other international organizations formed a good basis for a realistic programme of action to provide legal help for fugitives and migrants, including those whose status was not regulated under international law. A regional conference on the matter was to take place in 1996, concentrating on the migrant problem in CIS and neighbouring States. Ukraine was confident that the results of the conference would be helpful in working out an effective programme of action to deal with uncontrolled migration in the region and to contribute to a wider understanding of the problem.

28. Ms. RAMIRO-LOPEZ (Philippines) said that, as reflected in document E/1995/69, only 43 Member States had responded to the survey on international migration, representing less than 25 per cent of the total number of Member States. The Group of 77 had assisted the Commission on Population and Development with the survey and had encouraged Member States to submit their responses. In her delegation's view, the Commission should have endeavoured to generate a more productive response. Her delegation suggested asking UNDP resident coordinators and other field offices of the United Nations system to coordinate with host countries in order to encourage greater response.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/C.2/50/L.2)

29. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, by its decision 1995/227 of 6 June 1995, the Economic and Social Council had recommended to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution entitled "Revision of the General Regulations of the World Food Programme and reconstitution of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes as the Executive Board of the World Food Programme". The text of that draft resolution was contained in document A/C.2/50/L.2.

30. It was envisaged that the FAO Conference would adopt a parallel resolution at its twenty-eighth session on 27 October 1995. It could not, from a legal point of view, carry out its scheduled elections for members of the new Executive Board if the parallel resolution of the General Assembly had not yet come into force. Therefore, the Committee had been requested to take action on that draft resolution as soon as possible.

31. Ms. KELLEY (Secretary of the Committee) informed members that the last phrase of paragraph 6 of the draft resolution should read "as endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1995/227 and by the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at its 108th meeting on 12 June 1995." In the third paragraph, the word "structure" should be replaced by "outcome".

32. Draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.2, as orally revised, was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 102: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (A/50/190-E/1995/73)

33. Mr. STOBY (Director, Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said that the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 49/128 on the report of the International Conference on Population and Development focused on the question of requirements for international assistance and flow of financial resources, institutional follow-up issues and reporting procedures, and implementation by the specialized agencies and related organizations of the United Nations system, by the governing body of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and by the Commission for Population and Development.

34. On the subject of international assistance and flow of resources, the total cost of the population package in the Programme of Action was estimated at $17 billion in the year 2000, $18.5 billion in the year 2005, $20.5 billion in the year 2010 and $21.7 billion in the year 2015. It was tentatively estimated that up to two thirds of the cost would continue to be met by the countries themselves, with one third expected to come from external resources. The least developed countries and other low-income developing countries, however, would require a greater share of external resources on a concessional and grant basis. Assuming that recipient countries could generate sufficient domestic resources, the need for complementary resource flows from donor countries and international financial institutions would be on the order of $5.7 billion in the year 2000, $6.1 billion in 2005, $6.8 billion in 2010 and $7.2 billion in 2015. The report outlined the steps already taken by the Executive Director of UNFPA to hold consultations on mobilization of resources and to arrange regular global consultations.

35. With respect to Secretariat support and coordination arrangements for the United Nations system, he pointed out that the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) had convened the International Conference on Population and Development Inter-Agency Task Force pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/128. The Task Force was designed to promote system-wide collaboration and implementation of the decisions of the Conference at the country level through the resident coordinator system. Guidelines had been issued for the latter to provide direction for integrated implementation of the Programme of Action and recommendations of the Conference and other recent United Nations conferences.

36. The working group on policy-related issues had produced a Common Advocacy Statement which had been endorsed by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). The statement sought to establish shared language for the

United Nations system and in following up on the Conference and other recent United Nations conferences and programmes of action. The working group on international migration would hold its first meeting on 19 October at the headquarters of the International Labour Organization, which served as its lead agency. The Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development was another similar follow-up organ.

37. Ms. RAMIRO-LOPEZ (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development was a blueprint for development strategies that should be implemented in the context of the other results of international conferences such as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. Although its focus was on population, decision makers should consider the broad issues of and interrelationships between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development, economic status and empowerment of women, and education and trade. The Programme of Action should not be treated in isolation.

38. With respect to the resources needed to implement population and development programmes in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, she said that innovative means of mobilizing resources would have to be devised. The consultative group on the mobilization of resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action, convened pursuant to resolution 49/128, had had its first consultations on 20 January 1995 with representatives of various multilateral and bilateral donor countries, the World Bank and regional financial institutions. However, the report of those consultations did not disclose whether any definitive strategies to generate adequate resources had been found. The question of expanding the Commission on Population and Development had led to an impasse during the substantive session of the Council in Geneva. She was in favour of increasing the number of countries represented on the Commission from 27 to 53, not only for the sake of transparency, but also to reflect growth in the membership of the United Nations.

39. The Group of 77 and China supported a distinct Executive Board for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to enable the latter to fulfil its important role and responsibility in the follow-up to the Conference and in the providing of technical and financial assistance required to help developing countries meet their own population and development needs. The Group had also encouraged the participation of population and development experts in the Board's deliberations.

40. Turning to Secretariat support and coordination arrangements for the United Nations system, she said that while she appreciated the efforts of various agencies and task forces involved in the implementation of development strategies adopted by developing countries, those agencies should not lose sight of the fact that the plans and actions were country-driven programmes and, therefore participation of the recipient countries in their formulation and implementation was essential.

41. The Group of 77 and China wished to express their reservation on the UNFPA proposal to redirect resources that had been committed to developing countries

which were doing comparatively well in their development efforts to countries which might require further assistance. The predictability of resources was taken into account in formatting strategies, and to implement such a propcsal would be counterproductive. She advocated maximizing technical and economic cooperation among developing countries in implementing the development programme. The decision of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board to consider those modalities as the first option towards fulfilment of objectives in socio-economic planning remained a valid concept. Indeed, it was likely to assume added importance in the future in view of the changes occurring in the international system and their impact on the traditional structure of multilateral technical cooperation.

42. Mrs. MENENDEZ (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, drew attention to the Union's positions on implementation of the Programme of Action, as expressed at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva and summarized in a paper distributed at the current meeting of the Committee. She reiterated her support for the important decisions taken at the Fourth World Conference on Women and emphasized the importance of ensuring an integrated and coordinated follow-up to all major international conferences.

43. Ms. YANG Yanyi (China), said that since the Cairo Conference, the Chinese Government had taken a number of follow-up measures. The integral adjustment and promotion of economic growth, social development, population, resources and environment had been adopted as important guidelines in China's eighth and ninth five-year plans, and the long-range plan for 3010 that were currently being formulated. Information about the Conference and its Plan of Action had been widely disseminated throughout the country, and efforts were being made to implement the goals identified at the Conference in order to solve China's population problem for the benefit of the people and future generations. The Chinese Government had formulated the Work Programme for Family Planning of China (1995 to 2000) and had established family planning policies and programmes linking citizens' rights with obligations and individual interests with those of society. A national conference would be held before the end of 1995 to share and publicize successful experiences combining family planning with economic development.

44. Although encouraging progress had been made in implementing the Programme of Action, two problems had emerged. Firstly, despite the fact that the Programme of Action recognized the sovereignty of each country in implementing its proposals in keeping with its national laws and development priorities, some people criticized the population policies of other countries in an attempt to impose their own will and moral values on them. Such criticism was not only an interference in the internal affairs of and sovereignty of other countries but also a barrier to international friendly cooperation and the smooth implementation of the Programme of Action. Irresponsible and harmful policy practices of that kind should meet with resistance from the international community. Secondly, implementation of the Programme of Action required not only efforts from Governments and peoples of various countries but also the support of relevant United Nations agencies. She welcomed the efforts made by the United Nations Commission on Population and Development, UNFPA and other organizations and agencies in promoting the implementation of the Plan of Action. However, she pointed out that the relevant United Nations agencies and

international organizations were confronted with unprecedented pressures and challenges. Changes in the functions of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development justified an expansion of that body. In fulfilling their respective functions, United Nations committees, programmes and funds should avoid focusing on certain issues to the exclusion of others.

45. Mr. PAIVA (International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that chapter X of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development contained a comprehensive and balanced global migration policy framework which IOM had warmly welcomed. IOM had made every effort to incorporate the principles underlying the Programme of Action into its own planning. The strategic plan which it had started to elaborate in 1993 had integrated the relevant elements of the Programme of Action.

46. An information sheet linking the IOM strategic plan with the Programme of Action had been issued and shared with other international agencies. In that context, IOM welcomed the opportunity to participate in the Inter-Agency Task Force working group on international migration. Such collaboration would be required among the various intergovernmental agencies whose mandates called for follow-up action to the International Conference on Population and Development. A programme of action, however, did not in itself produce action. More than words would be needed to give effect to the results of the Conference, and IOM had made and would make significant efforts to continue a dialogue within its membership on the conclusions of the Conference.

47. Mr. ACHA (Peru) said that, as part of its population policy, his Government was applying an integrated family-planning strategy and had approved an extraordinary budgetary provision for that purpose. A major national campaign had been launched to disseminate information on legally authorized methods of family planning. Those methods were within reach of all families wishing to use family planning irrespective of social class, and without rewards or incentives being offered by the State. Peru's national population policy was modern and rational. Nothing in that policy or in the supporting legislation constituted a violation of the right to life, which was guaranteed from conception. Peru would continue to count on the support of international agencies in developing and implementing its national population policy.

48. He supported the idea of a separate Executive Board for UNFPA in the light of the increasing importance and scope of population issues. The report under discussion (A/50/190) should have taken into account the important deliberations of the annual July session of the Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA and in particular, resolution 95/15 on priority programmes and the direction of UNFPA in light of the Cairo Conference. He expressed his total support for the activities of UNFPA and for concentration of basic spheres of activities which would enable the fund to define the strategic focus for its programmes and to make the most of the comparative advantage and experience in the field that it enjoyed in dealing with population and development issues.

49. Mr. KEBEDE (Ethiopia) said that as the third most populous country in Africa, his country attached paramount importance to following up the results of the International Conference on Population and Development. The international community should scrupulously implement the recommendations that had emerged from the Conference. Recipient and donor countries should enhance their dialogue bilaterally and multilaterally on the basis of genuine interdependence and shared but differentiated responsibility.

50. His delegation was grateful to the international community for the increased assistance given, in relative terms, to the United Nations Population Fund following the recommendations of the Conference. Such assistance should not, however, be temporary and limited in scope, but should be further buttressed through substantial increments. Ethiopia was a country affected by an exceedingly high fertility rate, high infant, child and maternal morbidity and mortality rate, low nutritional status, low per capita income and a declining food self-sufficiency ratio. The quality of the environment was also rapidly declining and natural resources were being depleted, partly as a result of the high rate of population growth. The Government was determined to search for a lasting solution to such problems within the framework of implementing the Programme of Action of the Conference.

51. A year before the convening of the Conference Ethiopia had launched a population policy, the main objective of which was to bring down the level of fertility to a manageable level as soon as possible. It aimed at decreasing the total fertility rate from the current 7.7 children per woman to 4 by the year 2015. To that end, the contraceptive prevalence rate was to be raised from the current 4 per cent of eligible people to 44 per cent by 2015. The Government had also made every effort to publicize the Programme of Action both among the general public and among governmental, non-governmental and other concerned bodies.

52. The population policy, which was congruent not only with the Programme of Action of the Conference but also with resolutions adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, aimed at the broadest possible participation by the people. The national Population Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, oversaw the progress and outcome of population programmes throughout the country. There was a National Office of Population in the Prime Minister's office which served as the Secretariat of the Population Council; and that structure was replicated at federal and zonal levels. Following the Conference some modifications to the national Plan of Action for the implementation of the population policy had been seen to be necessary and the Government had therefore set up the national Multisectoral Technical Committee to bring the Plan of Action into line with the Programme of Action.

53. A population policy would hardly be successful unless women were empowered economically, politically and socially. A Women's Affairs Office had therefore been established in the Prime Minister's office and efforts had been made to coordinate the activities of that Office with those of the National Office of Population. The role of non-governmental organizations in population activities was important but they should act in accordance with national policies and should recognize their distinct roles and responsibilities. The Government was encouraging their representation on the Population Council and the Multisectoral

Technical Committee. The Government was committed to supporting national population activities financially, technically and politically. Since the country's infrastructure had been devastated by 10 years of civil war, however, assistance was also needed from the international community and the United Nations system, for whose continuing help his country was grateful.

54. Mr. RESHETNYAK (Ukraine) said that the year that had passed since the International Conference on Population and Development had made it possible to see the issues involved in a clearer light. One such was the important role played by the Economic and Social Council. He believed that the reorganization of the Council's work should be aimed at strengthening its coordinating role. A monitoring and control mechanism should be set up to enable it to implement the decisions of the Conference and to make more effective use of other organizations of the United Nations system.

55. How the Programme of Action of the Conference was implemented would show whether the United Nations could translate decisions into reality and would indicate to what extent international conferences on social and economic issues were effective. The first steps that had been taken following the Conference had been promising. The inter-agency mechanism for the implementation of the Programme of Action bid fair to become the only focal point within the United Nations system that could provide the necessary coordination and avoid duplication with other bodies. He welcomed the creation of four working groups for the Commission on Population and Development, but supported the proposal that a fifth should be formed on issues of reproductive health, considering that in 1998 the Commission would be considering the questions of reproductive rights and reproductive health.

56. He noted that the final documents of the Conference and of other recent conferences had mentioned the problems of countries with economies in transition. That showed the growing international awareness that problems of social and economic development could not really be solved without taking into account the interests of such countries. In that context he urged that the adjustments to programmes and activities of the specialized agencies, mentioned in General Assembly resolution 49/128, paragraph 14, should be made as soon as possible. He also hoped that help for such countries would not be given on the "residual" principle. Such help would be most useful in the form of resident coordinators in the field, with considerably expanded responsibilities. A larger role should also be played by United Nations regional commissions in the interests of regional cooperation.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.